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its behalf. At present there appears to be no prospect that any other having the title of its importance will ever be put alongside it. We have, however, only to wait patiently to see what, in this respect, the future will bring forth, content with noting the absence thus far of any hostile or rival principle.

XI.—*Did Der Von Kürenberg Compose the Present Form of the Nibelungenlied?**

By FRANKLIN CARTER,

PROFESSOR OF THE GERMAN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE IN YALE COLLEGE.

In 1857 the late Moritz Haupt, then Professor in the university at Berlin, published under the title "*Des Minnesangs Frühling*," the edition of the early lyric poems of the Minnesänger which Lachmann had projected, and upon which he had expended, during the latter part of his life, a good deal of labor. The book appeared as the combined work of Lachmann and Haupt. In this volume there are fifteen strophes under the title "*Der von Kürenberg*," taken with their title from the manuscript of early German songs in the National Library at Paris. Thirteen of these strophes are in the metre of the *Nibelungenlied*, and there has been for some years a growing tendency among the *littérateurs* and scholars of Germany to impute the authorship of this poem, as we have it, to the von Kürenberg who is supposed to have written these strophes. Among those who have been leading champions of this opinion are Pfeiffer, Professor in the Vienna University, who died in 1868, and Bartsch, still Professor in Heidelberg. It was in 1862, in a session of the Imperial Academy at Vienna, that Franz Pfeiffer advanced his "scientific" proofs for this authorship of the poem, and

* This paper was prepared for the Society's meeting in 1876, but the writer was unable to attend the meeting.

this event has been regarded as the first authoritative claim for the von Kürenberg, and certainly that was the beginning of the vigorous discussion of the question. But Dr. Vollmöller, whose essay on the newest theories concerning the origin and composer of the Nibelungen poem received a first prize from the Tübigen University in 1874, calls attention to a passage in F. J. Mone's treatise on the National German Poets of the Middle Ages, published in his "*Badisches Archiv*" at Karlsruhe in 1826, wherein the verses of the von Kürenberg are discussed as follows: "One single poem by this author has been preserved, to which evidently the melody has secured a long life, since this is set forth in the fourth strophe as something distinguished. For us the poem and contents are of the greatest importance. For the composition is in the epic measure, in the long four-lined strophe as in the Nibelungen, and the contents are in the spirit of the epos, with its figures and forms of speech. In both respects a remarkable poem, since it stands on the border between the epic and lyric poem, and shows us how the latter issued from the former. It is indeed, when one reads the poems of the Kürenberger, as if one had in hand an epic poet of the good old time, as for instance the poet of the Nibelungen, so similar are they in spirit and language." This language was used by Mone forty-one years before Pfeiffer's discourse at Vienna. This discourse, printed in the collection of essays from the pen of its author, entitled "*Freie Forschung*," aims to prove that the author of the Kürenberger-strophes and the present form of the Nibelungenlied are identical, but there is no reason to suppose that Pfeiffer had read the passage from Mone. Bartsch, in his investigations on the Nibelungen, says (p. 369) that the hypothesis of Pfeiffer, "*wird beinahe zur Gewissheit*," becomes almost a certainty. It may be noted in passing that Bartsch, when replying in the *Germania*, 1874, third left, to a sharp attack from Scherer in Vol. 17 of the "*Zeitschrift für Deutsches Alterthum*," on the arguments of Pfeiffer and Bartsch for this identity of authorship, says: "I have never spoken of a demonstration, only of a high degree of probability." It may be doubted whether the words "becomes

almost a certainty," do not justify Scherer's statement that Bartsch claims a demonstration. But certainly the question of the identification of the two authors, the von Kürenberg and the composer of the *Nibelungen*, is one of great interest. The number of strophes under the name "*Der von Kürenberg*" in the same metre as the *Nibelungenlied* is thirteen. It is then proposed to identify the author of a nameless epic containing twenty-three hundred strophes with the author of a lyric poem containing only thirteen strophes, on the ground of internal resemblances. It is a venturesome proposal, but there is considerable plausible evidence for accepting this identification.

The first argument and mainstay with Pfeiffer for this identification is the existence of a conventional law or usage until the middle of the thirteenth century, that no epic poet should employ the metre invented by another poet. That such a law existed in the thirteenth century with respect to *lyric* poetry is undoubtedly true, but the existence of such a law with respect to the *epic* poetry of the last part of the twelfth century or the first part of the thirteenth cannot be proven. Even to the assumption of the sweeping authority of such a law over the *lyric forms of the twelfth* century there is objection, and Wilmanns (who is referred to by all as authority), page 30 of his introduction to *Walther von der Vogelyeide*, gives several instances of the borrowing of metrical form among these early lyric authors. Fischer endeavors in his appendix to "*Die Forschungen über das Nibelungenlied*," to show that most of the cases cited by Wilmanns are instances in which different authors have hit upon the same metre, as a variation of the old German metre of Otfried and others, where each line is divided into two half lines of four *hebungen* each. But even were this conceded, there is nothing to show that the metre of the *Nibelungen* poem is not also one of the early variations from that of Otfried. Attention is called by Fischer to the fact that most of the epic productions are in a variation of this *Nibelungen* strophe, and that therefore such a usage or law as prevented one poet from writing in the metre of another, must have been in force in the epic circle. But in at least three of the

epic poems we find exactly the same strophe, and in regard to two of these three (König Ortnit* and Alpharts Tod) there is irrefragable evidence that they belong as early as the first fourth of the thirteenth century. That these two poems may not be allowed to have weight against the supposed law, two additional suppositions are devised to support the original supposition. First, the Alphart is assigned by Bartsch as a third poem to the authorship of Der von Kürenberg, and second, the Ortnit is pushed forward to a time when the supposed law is supposed to have lost its force. Did such a law ever prevail in the epic circle, it should naturally prevail at the time when the number of epic poems produced was large and individual eminence was coveted, and not in the days of comparative unproductiveness. That the Nibelungen was one of the earliest of the well-known poems, the modification of its strophe to many different forms attests. But these different forms may be well explained, not as the result of a systematic ownership or copyright among epic poets, but as the natural attempts of an increasing and developing art to invent variations on a well-known strophe—the common property of all poets.

We have then, in order to accept the law respecting borrowing so confidently laid down by Pfeiffer, to modify it by two suppositions that greatly lessen our ability to accept it. These are, first, that the author of Alpharts Tod is also the von Kürenberg whose identity with the author of the Nibelungen poem this law would compel us to admit, and second, that the law in force at the end of the twelfth century had lost its authority at the time of the composition of König Ortnit, or in other words that König Ortnit cannot have been composed until the law had lost its force. Furthermore the existence of such a law, implying great effort to attain individual renown, would certainly have called out a far greater variety of strophe-form than we find in the epic circle, as it did call forth this variety among the lyric poets. Bartsch, fully admitting the difficulties that surround this

* Müllenhoff, in *Haupt's Zeitschrift*, Vol. 13, pp. 185-92, proves this in regard to König Ortnit. It is admitted by the Kürenberg advocates in regard to Alphart.

supposed law, does not rest mainly upon it, but still adheres firmly to the Kürenberg hypothesis from reasons of an equally internal sort.

In one way the arguments from internal evidence in regard to such a poem as the Nibelungenlied are of great value, and that is in determining its unity or compositeness. It seems inevitable that any one who studies the poem seriously should believe that it has many interpolations. He who so believes cannot accept an argument from *hebungen* and *senkungen*, from verbal or grammatical forms, until he is sure that the strophes used as arguments, wherein these peculiarities are found, are all from one author. In other words, the subject matter and its presentation have a higher weight and authority than the form of presentation. He who assumes that the numerous inconsistencies in the details of the story are of small account against a unity of authorship, and then proceeds to determine the author by arguments between the language and metrical usages of this poem and that of some almost nameless and unknown poet, would seem to be straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel. Nevertheless it is worth while to note in what particulars besides strophe-form the verses of von Kürenberg agree with those of the Nibelungen poem, and even to weigh the force of these agreements.

Bartsch lays some stress upon the argument that both poems originated in the same region. There has been a wide difference of opinion in regard to the geographical relations of the Nibelungen poem, but there is good reason for conceding that the writer, or *some of the writers* of the Nibelungen were familiar with the region where the von Kürenbergs lived. The preponderance of authorities now assign the origin of the present form of the epic to Austria, on account of the geographical knowledge of Austria which the poem exhibits, and no objection to its origin there on the ground of linguistic coloring can have much weight. The von Kürenbergs belonged to the region of the Danube in Austria.

In regard to the *time* of the composition of the poem under discussion there is still greater divergence of opinion. Even some who accept as of great worth the laborious investigations

of Bartsch on the Nibelungen poem, cannot admit his claim that the original German poem, of which we have a revision at two removes, runs back to 1140, his time for von Kürenberg. Zarncke has claimed that our Nibelungen poem cannot antedate 1130 because of the allusion to the Landgraves of Thüringen in strophes 2005-6, for the lords of Thüringen were exalted to the dignity of landgraves with great pomp in that year. But here we may note the danger which follows a dependence for argument on any single strophe. It is probable that strophe 2005, even though Lachmann did not so regard it, is an interpolation, and then all that could be claimed amounts to this, that the interpolation did not precede 1130. But in any case this allusion would favor quite as strongly a composition as late as 1170, as one so early as 1140, if Landgrave Irnfried is to stand for any historical character in the original poem. But Holtzmann (whose science partook a little of the sensational) placed the von Kürenberg much earlier, was disposed to identify him with Conrad the clerk, secretary of Bishop Pilgrim of Passau referred to in the *Klage*, who belonged between 971 and 984, and claimed that there are features in the Kürenberg strophes that identify his language with that of the Hildebrandslied and Notker's version of the psalms! Lachmann, whom Scherer follows, did not push the von Kürenberg back of 1170, and accepting the agreement of language and expression between his strophes and those of the Nibelungen poem (which agreement is by some strongly denied), the agreement in metrical form, and the somewhat general consent that the origin of our manuscripts of the Nibelungen poem is to be fixed at 1190-1210, there seems to be reason for the adoption of a date as late as Lachmann requires. Even then there is an opportunity to allow twenty or thirty years for the great changes that Bartsch claims to have proved by a comparison of manuscripts took place before the original composition of the Nibelungen in a German form assumed the shape of our present manuscripts, though of course Bartsch would either object to a difference of twenty years in origin for the two poems, or hold that this period is not adequate to account for

the changes that he claims to have proved. But the general tendency among investigators is to admit a tolerably close coincidence in time for the *origin** of the Nibelungen, and the strophes that pass as composed by von Kürenberg. That the metrical form of the poems is in general identical, is involved in the hypothesis of Pfeiffer, and that there is a certain resemblance in the use of rhymes and in the omission of senkungen † has been shown by Bartsch. But one element in Bartsch's demonstration rests upon the acceptance of rules for the division of lines into accented and unaccented syllables, which revolutionize the metre of the strophe as Lachmann taught it. Many accept these rules, but they belong yet in a region of controversy. Even if it were established that the senkung generally fails between the second and third hebung in the eighth half-line, as is certainly the case in several of the strophes assigned to Von Kürenberg it carries the agreement no farther than the admitted general similarity. It is indeed an agreement in a minute particular, but for all we know, as Scherer suggests, that may be a natural, an organic evolution in the metre. That of the eighty strophes composed in the Nibelungen metre and interpolated in the Gudrun, forty-two exhibit the same omission of the senkung between the second and third hebungen would hardly be advanced as an argument that the von Kürenberg inserted these eighty strophes. On the contrary the fact indicates that even from the pen of a clumsy bearbeiter the omission of the senkung in this position came as a natural element in the strophe.

Much has been made by the champions of the theory under consideration of the coincidences in verbal expression between von Kürenberg and the Nibelungen poem. Similarities were adduced by Pfeiffer in his original discourse, and are to be found on pp. 25-28 of his *Freie Forschung*. Additions were made by Thausning, and Bartsch supplements these with

* The word origin would here mean for Lachmannites original songs, and for the Kürenberger advocates originals of present manuscripts.

† It ought to be noted that the omission of the senkungen varies in the different manuscripts. A has much more frequent omissions than either B or C, and B more than C.

further contributions in his *Untersuchungen*, pp. 362-3. It does not seem noteworthy that the twenty-three hundred strophes of the *Nibelungen* should yield a large number of forms of expression found in the thirteen strophes of von Kürenberg. Dr. Volmöller has (pp. 16-33 of his prize essay) paralleled nearly every one of the coincidences adduced by Pfeiffer, Thausning, and Bartsch by quotations from other Middle German poets early and late. Is it not true that such coincidences of expression are not merely frequent, but inevitable, in an age when printing is unknown and the only means for the community of knowing poetry is hearing it, when literary influence is purely personal and plagiarism difficult to prove? Did not "The Flower and the Leaf" creep into the ranks of the Chaucerian poems and remain unchallenged there for a hundred years on the simple ground of coincidence of expression and style? By no means is it here claimed that "The Flower and the Leaf" is not a Chaucerian poem, but attention is called to the fact that able scholars object that this ground of proof for a Chaucerian authorship is insufficient. How many of Hoccleve's poems might be referred to Chaucer on the grounds whereby we are requested to accept von Kürenberg as the author of the *Nibelungenlied*? It is a pleasing study to seek the evidences of resemblance between the strophes of von Kürenberg and the *Nibelungen*. It gratifies the love of order and unity to assign the lyric verses to his youthful ardor, and the momentous story of the Burgundian tragedy to his later years. Perhaps there is no impossibility involved in the production by the same poet of these two differing poems. But never were lyrics more subjective than are those of von Kürenberg, and never was story more objectively told than is the death of the Burgundian heroes. There are lingering, descriptive traces here and there in the epic, but the descriptions are outward, concrete, not marked by the inwardness of lyric emotion, and never do we get a glimpse of the epic poet's personality. The poets may belong together in time, in geographical region, as they do in rhythm, but in the absence of all critical knowledge of either it can never be more than an ingeniously defended hypothesis

that they are one. May they not belong together rather, as do Ben Jonson and Herrick, or Chaucer and Hoccleve, than be identical?

Scherer has made a point which it is very difficult, if not impossible for the identifiers to overcome. The groundwork was suggested by one of Haupt's notes to the strophes assigned to "Der von Kürenberg" in *Des Minnesangs Frühling*. Haupt conjectures that the title in the Paris manuscript may have been deduced from the strophe in which a lady is represented as saying: "I heard a knight singing extremely well in the Kürenberger's metre." Scherer regards that inference of title as certain, inasmuch as there is a variation from this metre among the Kürenberg strophes, so that we have two metres under the title *Der von Kürenberg*. Now if there was one metre distinctively and technically called "Kürenberges Wîse," and *but one*, as that term implies, there is not a vestige of *proof* that either of the two classes of strophes was composed by von Kürenberg himself. No exception can be taken to this position, and the assertion of Bartsch and Fischer that such a view removes all the poetry from the interpretation of the strophe in which the expression occurs may be true, but it is not poetry, or invention, or prettiness for these strophes that is sought here, but exactness in the application of the term "Kürenberges Wîse." It is then true that we do not know that *von Kürenberg himself* wrote one of these strophes. Do we even know that he invented either metre here used? Not absolutely, but we find some reason to believe that the second form of strophe, the one marking the lines in which Kürenberger wîse occurs, is the characteristic metre of von Kürenberg. In the first place its use in the strophe by the lady singing in response to the knight *who sang in it*, makes it probable that this is the "Kürenberger wîse." The lady sings (*Des Minnesangs Frühling*, p. 8. 3-8): "I heard a knight singing extremely well in the Kürenberges wîse: he must leave for me the land, or I will give myself to do with him." Then its use in the strophe of the knight, when he replies, gives further reason for regarding it as the Kürenberg metre. He replies (p. 9.

29-36): "Now bring me very quickly my horse and my armor, for I must abandon the country for a lady. She intends to compel me to be devoted to her. She must ever be without my love." Here the same knight speaks whom she has heard sing in the "Kürenberges wise." He replies in the same metre which she uses, probably the one used previously by him. It is the Nibelungen metre, probably the one that the lady calls "Kürenberges wise," but it by no means follows that von Kürenberg himself wrote these strophes. On the contrary the title *Der von Kürenberg over two forms of strophe*, and the use of the term Kürenberg's metre, are inconsistent facts, and the natural conclusion is that von Kürenberg did *not write both classes of strophes* here printed, and that probably he wrote no line of this poetry, but simply invented and held a not very exclusive copyright to one of these two strophe-forms. But if von Kürenberg did not write these strophes, may not he who wrote them be the author of the Nibelungen poem? No; for if, as seems certain, the author of these strophes borrowed Kürenberg's metre, why may not another borrowing have taken place for the Nibelungen poem? Is it not more natural to suppose two, and possibly fifty borrowings, rather than a borrowing by a single author, for poems so widely different?

It is involved in most of the arguments for the identity of the authors that the lyric poetry grew out of the epic; that the strophe was composed for epos and afterwards devoted to lyric purposes, and what seems to have been preserved from the early records of various countries favors this supposition. That it really was so in the Middle German epoch is open to doubt.* That in every country the natural songs of love are as early as the national songs of heroes, human nature would seem to make possible. That von Kürenberg was the earliest known lyric poet in the twelfth century (if indeed he can be said to be known) does not preclude the possibility of songs of love long previous to him. Elements of a lyric nature are found in nearly every great epic, and the internal evidence is against the invention of this strophe primarily for epic pur-

* Scherer believes that it could not have been so.

poses. Any one who has read Gervinus' remarks on the strophe of the *Nibelungenlied* will perceive what is here meant. Any one who has read the poem in the original must be captivated by a theory to regard the strophe as created for epic purposes. Lyric it is and always was, and probably was the invention of a von Kürenberg. Borrowed by some nameless poet or poets to embody the majestic contents of some old Latin poem, or more probably the heroic traditions of the people, it is ill adapted to the mighty burden which it conveys. But so grand was this burden, that the poem impressed itself on all who heard it in spite of its crudity, and became a model for epic poems for generations.

No account has been taken of Vollmöller's claim that *wîse* means simply melody, and that metrical form was often borrowed. That *wîse* did once mean only that is certain, but at the end of the twelfth century its meaning probably embraced also the metrical form. But König Ortnit and Alpharts Tod are stubborn facts against Pfeiffer's argument from metrical proprietorship. They alone make the supposition three-fold less supposable. Bartsch's argument from metrical agreements are either theoretical or so involved in the identity of metres as to have no great force. The arguments from coincidences of expression are, in the absence of very definite points in time, not weighty enough to prove anything more than unconscious imitation. An agreement in respect to the time of origin within a quarter of a century may be conceded. An agreement as to geographical origin is probable. But over against the theory of Bartsch and Pfeiffer, an ingenious hypothesis sustained by a combination of hypotheses, some ingenious but some opposed by facts, may be placed as an explanation of agreements between the so-called Kürenberger strophes and the *Nibelungenlied* another hypothesis, which many weighty facts in the history of German literature and in the history of poetry and the analysis of these two poems favor, and to which the arguments of scholars of authority seem to point, viz.: Der von Kürenberg invented the "*Kürenberges wîse*," or the *Nibelungen* strophe-form. This metre was borrowed in at least four well-established

instances, and probably indefinitely, as it was invented before the ambition for or attainment of literary eminence insisted on a copyright. The four certain instances before a score of years of the thirteenth century had passed are the second form of strophes in the Minnesangs Frühling under the title von Kürenberg, König Ortnit, Alpharts Tod, and the Nibelungen. The beauty of the so-called Kürenberger strophes may have influenced the composer of the Nibelungen in his choice of metre, and led him unconsciously to adopt forms of expression identical with some elements in the few strophes that easily remained in his memory and inspired his imagination. But there is not a vestige of *proof* that Der von Kürenberg wrote either one of the lyric strophes in the Paris manuscript under his name or the Nibelungen, and had it not been for the German scholar's unwillingness to leave so grand an epic nameless, we may believe that this theory would never have been promulgated.

XII.—On Dissimilated Geminatio*n*.

By F. A. MARCH,

PROFESSOR OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND OF COMPARATIVE PHILOLOGY
IN LAFAYETTE COLLEGE.

Students of etymology work on the theory that every letter in a word is a bearer of meaning. The roots, indeed, in the Indo-European tongues are generally accepted provisionally as in some sort integers, and their ultimate elements are left untormented; but every letter which is added to them, and every change which is made in them, is treated as a modifier of the sense. An addition is often a plain compounding with another familiar word, as in the Gothic *libái-dêdum*, live-did; and when it is not so, the added letter is taken for a relic of such a word, as the d of lived is a relic of did. Scientific etymologists accept the derivation of no word as complete, until the original words from which each letter